

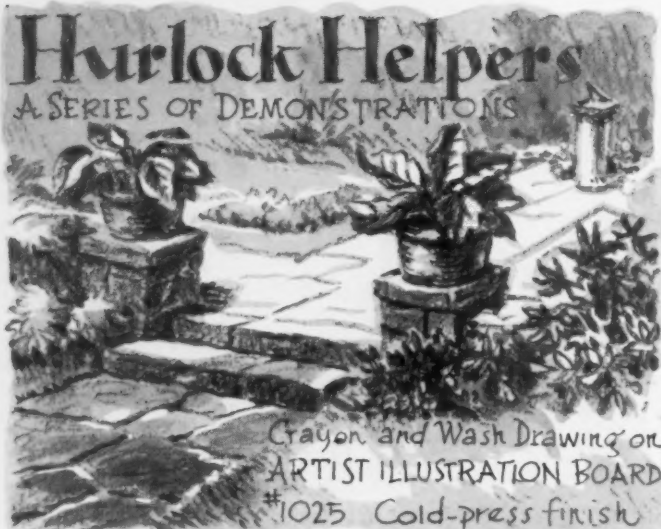
AMERICAN ARTIST



February 1942

Gladys Rockmore Davis

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Noon of a Summer Day...

This drawing captures the mood of the day, with "the fleet" tied up at an old fish wharf at Gloucester, Mass. The harbor is at flood tide. The boats seem almost to be sitting at the dock's edge in a state of peaceful siesta. A difficult subject, but a challenging one—particularly the effect of the sun glinting on the water.

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The pencils used were Dixon Eldorado 2H, 4H, HB, 2B, 3B and 4B.

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The rubber (a Dixon Pikit) was deftly used to give brilliance to the water effects. Because Pikit is not gritty, it leaves no scars or crumbs.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

A MONTHLY SURVEY OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ARTS

Athens—Apr. 9-30

Univ. of Georgia Art Gallery; Southern States Art League Annual.

Open to active members (members must be practicing artists born in South or resident for 2 years). All media. Jury. Entry cards & works due in Mar. Ethel Hutson, 7321 Panoia St., New Orleans, La.

Baltimore—Mar. 13-Apr. 12

Baltimore Museum; Maryland Artists' Annual.

Open to artists born or resident in Maryland. All media. Jury. Purchase & cash prizes. Entry cards due Feb. 13; works, Feb. 18. Leslie Cheek, Jr., Dir., Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Md.

Dallas—Mar. 29-Apr. 25

Museum of Fine Arts; Allied Artists Annual.

Open to residents of Dallas County. All media. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry cards & works due Mar. 26. Richard F. Howard, Dir., Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, Texas.

Fort Worth—Mar. 1-14

Public Library; West Texas Annual.

Open to artists of West Texas. All media. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry cards due Feb. 23; works, Feb. 26. Mary Lake, Public Library, Fort Worth, Texas.

Hartford—Jan. 31-Feb. 22

Avery Memorial; Hartford Society of Women Painters.

Open to Connecticut artists living within a radius of 25 miles of Hartford. All media. Jury. Fee: \$2 for non-members. Prizes. Entry cards & works due Jan. 26. Muriel Alvord, 1033 Prospect Ave., Hartford, Conn.

Kansas City—Mar. 1-29

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery; Midwestern Artists' Annual.

Open to artists of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico & Texas. All media. Prizes: \$500 (Thos. J. Watson) in painting; purchase prize and others in graphic arts, watercolor & oil. Entry cards due Feb. 9; works, Feb. 16. Kansas City Art Institute, 4415 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, Mo.

New Haven—Mar. 26-Apr. 15

Free Public Library; New Haven Paint & Clay Club Annual.

Open to all artists. All media. Jury. Prizes totalling \$225. Entry cards & works due Mar. 16. Elizabeth B. Robb, 66 Vista Terrace, New Haven, Conn.

New Orleans—Mar. 8-31

Delgado Museum; Art Assn. of New Orleans Annual.

Open to members (membership open to all). All media. Jury. Prizes. Entry cards & works due Mar. 4. Arthur Feitel, Delgado Museum, New Orleans, La.

New York—Mar. 7-29

National Academy; Amer. Water Color Society, 75th Annual.

Open to all artists. Media: watercolor and pastel. Fee for non-members, 50c for each entry. Jury. Cash prizes & medals. Entry cards & works due Feb. 26. Harry De Maine, Sec'y, 3 East 89 St., New York, N. Y.

New York—Apr. 8-May 16

National Academy Galleries; Nat'l Academy of Design, 116th Annual.

Open to all American artists working in U. S. Media: painting & sculpture. Jury. Works due Mar. 23 & 24. Nat'l Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

Oakland—Mar. 1-29

Oakland Art Gallery; Annual Exhibition of Oils.

Open to all artists. Medium: oil. Three juries. Prizes of \$100; medals. Entry cards & works due Feb. 21. Oakland Art Gallery, Municipal Auditorium, Oakland, Cal.

GREETINGS

We editors are deeply grateful for the many greetings sent us by our readers at Christmastime. We wish we could acknowledge all of them personally. Please be assured of our appreciation and our best wishes to all.

Parkersburg—Apr. 26-May 30

Fine Arts Center; Parkersburg Fine Arts Center, Annual.

Open to residents and former residents of Ohio, W. Va., Va. & Pa. Media: oil & watercolor. Fee: \$1 for each class entered, plus \$1 per crate. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry cards due Apr. 12; works Apr. 17. Parkersburg Fine Arts Center, 317 Ninth St., Parkersburg, West Virginia.

Plainfield—Feb. 8-Mar. 1

Plainfield Art Association; New Jersey Watercolor and Sculpture Society, 4th Annual.

Open to all New Jersey artists. Media: watercolor, pastel & sculpture. Jury. Fee: \$1 for members; \$1.50 for non-members. Entry cards due Jan. 31; works Feb. 2. Herbert Pierce, 309 Academy St., South Orange, N. J.

Portland, Me.—Mar. 1-28

Sweat Memorial Art Museum; Portland Society of Art, 59th Ann.

Open to living American artists. Media: oil, watercolor, pastel. Fee: \$1. Jury. No prizes. Entry cards due Feb. 7; works, Feb. 14. Bernice Breck, Sec'y, Sweat Memorial Art Museum, 111 High St., Portland, Me.

Richmond—Mar. 3-Apr. 14

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Virginia Museum's 3rd Biennial.

Open to living American artists. Medium: oil. No fee. Jury. Purchase prizes of \$3,000; 2 J. B. Payne Medals. Entry cards due Jan. 31; works, Feb. 3 to New York Jury; Feb. 9 to Richmond Jury. For full information write to Thos. C. Colt, Jr., Dir., Virginia Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

San Francisco—May 5-31

Museum of Art; San Francisco Art Association.

Open to artists resident in U. S. Media: watercolor & pastel. Jury. Cash prizes of \$1,100. Entry cards due Apr. 17; works, Apr. 23. San Francisco Museum of Art, War Memorial Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.

Seattle—Mar. 4-Apr. 5

Seattle Art Museum; Northwest Printmakers' 14th Annual

Open to all artists. All print media. Entry fee \$1. Jury. Purchase prizes. Entry cards due Feb. 16; works Feb. 19. Wm. S. Gamble, 1514 Palm Street, Seattle, Washington.

Tacoma—Apr. 19-May 3

College of Puget Sound; Artists of Southwest Washington.

Open to artists of Southwest Washington. Media: oil, tempera, watercolor & sculpture. Jury. Prizes. Entry cards due Apr. 2; works, Apr. 14. Write to Sec'y, Art Dept., College of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Wash.

Washington—Jan. 27-Mar. 1

Corcoran Gallery of Art; Society of Washington Artists' Annual.

Open to residents of District of Columbia, Maryland, & Virginia. Media: oil & sculpture. Jury. Prizes. Entry fee \$1 for non-members. Carnet W. Jex, 6010 20th St., N., Arlington, Va.

Washington—Mar. 27-Apr. 26

Corcoran Gallery of Art; Washington Watercolor Club Annual.

Open to all artists. Media: watercolor, pastel & print. Jury. Cash prizes. Entry fee \$1 for non-members. Entry cards due Mar. 23; works, Mar. 25. Mrs. Frances H. Combs, Sec'y, 3820 Kanawha St., Washington, D. C.

★ ★ ★

American Artist Pencil Sketching Contest

Open to any student, amateur, or professional artist in continental U. S. Media: graphite pencils only. No fee. Jury. Six prizes: books totalling \$65 (which will be shipped prepaid). Contest closes February 16. For details consult the January 1942 issue of AMERICAN ARTIST, or write to Room 1512, AMERICAN ARTIST, 330 W. 42 St., New York.

American Artist



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Photo by Robert McAfee

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AMERICAN ARTIST: Published monthly with the exception of July and August by WATSON-GUPTILL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 34 North Crystal Street, East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. • EXECUTIVE AND EDITORIAL OFFICES 330 West 42nd, New York, N. Y. • Ralph Reinhold, President and Treasurer; Ernest W. Watson, Vice Pres.; Arthur L. Guptill, Vice Pres. • 35 cents a copy. Yearly subscription \$3.00, payable in advance, to the U.S.A., U.S. Possessions, Cuba and Mexico. Canadian subscriptions \$3.50. Foreign subscriptions \$4.00. • Remittances by International or American Express Money Order or by Draft on a bank in the U. S. should be payable in United States funds. • Subscribers are requested to state profession or occupation. Changes of address must reach us before the 20th of the month to assure delivery of forthcoming issue. • Copyright 1942 by Watson-Guptill Publications, Inc., Title AMERICAN ARTIST registered in U. S. Patent Office. All rights reserved. • To Contributors: Articles, drawings, photographs, etc., sent with a view to publication will be carefully considered, but the publisher will not be responsible for loss or damage.

Entered as second class matter July 11, 1941, at the Post Office at East Stroudsburg, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

February 1942

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SURPRISE IN ARMOUR • DRAWING BY EARL OLIVER HURST

The original, 20 x 28 inches, appeared in color in Colliers (October 18, 1941)



Earl Oliver Hurst *An illustrator who laughs at life*

AN INTERVIEW BY ERNEST W. WATSON

There is humor in nearly every human situation. Even in the midst of tragedy people do funny things, ridiculous things. The humorist is one who is able to laugh at life even in its most solemn moments. Witness the jokes that come out of battlefields and bombings. Humor in such grim circumstances is so deeply overlaid with tragedy that it takes a measure of genius to expose it to view. Indeed much of the humor in ordinary events—too subtle to be seen by the multitudes—awaits discovery and dramatization by a Will Rogers or an Earl Oliver Hurst.

Hurst's humor is of that character. It springs from a deep understanding of human nature and a feeling of sympathy—albeit mirthful—for those who find themselves victims of predicaments. More than that, it results from the artist's propensity to identify himself with the actors in the comedy. This is not surprising in one who has Hurst's capacity for viewing his own misfortunes objectively. Some of his biggest laughs have been at his own expense.

A Turkey Dinner

There was, for example, that Thanksgiving dinner, back in the days when Hurst was still struggling on the lower rungs of the ladder. Thanksgiving day dawned without a turkey in the Hurst larder. This was serious, but not too serious. Hurst asked his wife to prepare a turkey dressing, adding that he would get the turkey. When the feast was spread and the candles lighted, the Hursts bowed their heads over a gorgeous synthetic turkey—artfully fabricated of craft paper—nesting on the platter of luscious turkey dressing. The Hursts laugh now at the memory of that event; they laughed just as heartily at the time. It was a good joke, even if it was on them. Incidentally, they still have that paper turkey.

The "Chagrin" Period

This happened in what might be called Hurst's "chagrin" period. The Hursts at that time were living in the little town of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, whence the artist had retreated from Cleveland, in an experiment which turned out dismally enough to make his residence in this oddly-named place particularly appropriate.

In Cleveland he had been doing a great variety of art work. From the art department of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* he had gone to a newspaper syndicate where, as assistant editor, he did comics, political cartoons, fashions; wrote editorials and managed a newspaper mat service. A year later he was working in a direct-mail house. Here he was handed every sort of job from labels to elaborate house organs. With his one hundred dollars a week he wasn't doing so badly for a youngster, but he was convinced that he was headed in the wrong direction. He couldn't see how, in this situation, he would ever get a chance to do "big time stuff." If, he reasoned, he should break away from this treadmill and have time to experiment, he could, in perhaps a year, develop enough skill to put him in the running. Full of confidence in this plan he withdrew from circulation and rented the Chagrin Falls home, whence he took his young wife Edna and one-year-old Joan.

The events of the fateful months that followed require the pages of a book for the telling. Expectations of early success were not realized. Life became one financial crisis after another. But the Hursts kept laughing and performing miracles of resourcefulness. Edna learned how to entertain the unexpected dinner guest on her last quarter and yesterday's left-overs. Earl taught her how to renew her meager wardrobe by dyeing each of her two summer dresses a different

Continued on page 8

Earl Oliver Hurst discusses some

The Illustrator as Stage Director

In creating fiction types it is just as easy for the illustrator to miscast his actors as it is for the director of a play. And good casting is just as vital on the pages of a magazine as on the stage. This story was about a prize fighter and a little waitress. He was a little style-conscious and she was a little plump. As I recall the story he was a homey type, and to break training was to burst out with an extra piece of pie a la mode. I believe I succeeded in depicting a chap who had never heard of a Brahms concerto and who would expect Picasso to be an Italian restaurant; he certainly *does* know DiMaggio's batting average and can tell you in what round Firpo knocked Dempsey through the ropes. The little waitress, isn't she just the kind of gal who would fall for him?

The casting problem here is in marked contrast to the foregoing. The girl is self-sufficient, nonchalant, smart. She is used to luxury. In the story she is heading her father's freighter tractor business in the North and is confident of her ability to direct it. The young man—definitely a tenderfoot—has flown up to dissuade her from the enterprise. By his sporty overdress, plus his apprehensive attitude, he is shown to be out of place; his mittens—note—have never been worn before. This is a vignette with a cropped edge, using almost three complete sides as natural edges. The man's figure helps to soften the abrupt crop of the picture, and its action, together with the dogs behind him, keeps the interest within the composition. The tracks in the snow, though logical enough, are a deliberate device to pull the white of the paper into the solidity of the picture.

A Problem of Line

I think this illustration is an excellent example of the function of line movement in a drawing. "She gave him her very best theatrical exit," was the caption. The problem of soft translucent drapery clinging to a figure at one time and falling away again was the job to be done principally by line. A photograph with a speed camera can catch a thing of this kind, and one would think that any such shot would be the answer to the problem. I frequently do use a camera to make a study of a certain part of an action. I say part of an action, because there are certain degrees of an action which if portrayed as the camera gets it (factually) does not convey the impression of action that the mind registers. I think the simplest example of this is that of a horse taking a hurdle. There is a split second when the four feet come together, and if stopped at that point the action would give the impression of the animal balancing himself on all fours on the hurdle. The action that registers itself as a horse taking a hurdle is that long arc of motion with front and rear legs fully extended. And so it becomes a matter again of recording impressions. As I recall this job in the making I first drew my impression of this haughty young thing traipsing across the page, chin up, and definitely overacting. Then I called in a model, read a portion of the script to her, and had her act it out. She flounced across the studio, probably a dozen times, while I studied her action and the action of the drapery. I then took two or three shots with a miniature camera. Bear in mind that I had already done a sketch of my first impression, without models. In the completion of the job I found that most of the photography was slow and clumsy compared with my impression. However, there were notes of conviction that these snaps did give me that made it worthwhile. Incidentally, I have no set way of going about an illustration. There are times when I feel the need of a great deal of research material, and times when I use none; times when I use models, and occasions when I use none. And the same is true of photographic work. But in all cases I first put down on the board, even if not very convincingly, my first impression and the

some of his illustrations

arrangement of the entire composition. In this way I believe it possible for the designer or artist that is in one to control the situation. It is so easy to be controlled by a photograph, with all of its detailed interesting information, which may not have one particle of good design in it.

From the Storehouse of Memory

Like most illustrators I store up impressions, and earmark them for some future use. The rear view of Boris Karloff in "Arsenic and Old Lace" was one of those never-to-be-forgotten impressions. The folds in those pants that seemed almost to hang at half-mast, their ludicrous elephantine appearance so completely fascinated me that I just couldn't wait to try them out on someone. When this hill-billy pappy came along, Karloff's pants were waiting for him. An interesting problem in this illustration was to convey the impression that the little girl at the right was definitely "out." To convey this I turned pappy's back to her, and further isolated her by the contrast of her stiff expression with the evident amusement of the other three. Problems of this kind give the illustrator more concern than matters of draftsmanship, physical composition and technical handling.

When the Gag's the Thing

In illustrations wherein the gag or idea is foremost, the artist must approach the drawing in a special way. The usual picture-making problems are present of course but all elements must be arranged for an emphatic focus on the idea. There must be a dramatic concentration of interest at the point where the gag heads up. In the *Collier's* cover—a typical dumb Dora with the fishing pole—that point is the snap of the broken line; outside of the not-too-exciting body action of pulling, that is the only action. This actually becomes the high spot or gag in the picture. It's the kind of thing that has to be felt. I don't think I could have built it up if I had studied it for weeks. But having experienced just that sensation I began to feel this line snapping and the first thing I knew it happened.

In this episode of the fouled lobster pot the focal point is the submerged head and shoulders of our hero. The composition had to be built around this; the lines of the figures, the boat and the ripples in the water all designed to that end.

Pointing-up a Situation

Shoring her up so she won't fill with the incoming tide. I hadn't experienced this when this job was done, but did soon after. A flat calm, gnats and helpless guests, the skipper is ever the goat.

The figure in the foreground is interesting partly because the picture had to have foreground interest, and yet not take too much away from the center of interest—the boat. To keep this foreground figure strong, but not too interesting, I threw him mostly in shadow and by contrast the boat interest became more brilliant. In this case the lines of rigging, the rake of the mast, all become part of a design in line; the hard straight lines are softened by the soft bending flexible lines of the figures. Going back to the foreground figure, he is highly stylized and actually out of drawing from a standpoint of realism. However, I feel that it is part of the artist's job to exaggerate or minimize to bring about a desired impression. Undoubtedly this fellow is too long geared, but the line movement is given greater vitality by his lanky figure. This entire situation might have been treated realistically and every inch of the space covered, but I believe the potent elements of design are brought out better through elimination. The blank white space for sky brings in the white paper as part of the picture.





HURST
continued from page 5

color every few weeks. The clock, pried from the instrument board of their old Cadillac, was hocked to buy gas for tomorrow's driving. Through it all there was merriment and sublime faith in the future.

Yet the experiment failed. At this point a relative doing well in business offered Hurst an opportunity to go into partnership with him, at a very attractive figure. He turned the offer down so suddenly that the well-meaning relative was offended; he never questioned that the future would bring success in his chosen field of art. At the end of his financial rope Earl returned to Cleveland and began to pick things up where he had left them. In his anxiety to pay off his debts he took on more work than he could execute in his best manner. It was in this situation that he was given an assignment by Chester Siebold, art director of General Electric Company. Pressed for time as usual, he began work one morning and, working steadily all day and night, delivered the drawing the next morning. Siebold scowled as he examined the work, then asked how much it was to cost him. "I gulped a few times," said Hurst, in describing the scene, "and told him the price was eighty-five dollars." Siebold hit the ceiling. "Why," he said, "I can get better drawings than that in Chicago for fifteen dollars any time." Then I hit the ceiling and we nearly came to blows. I told him I'd never make another drawing for him; I was through. Ragged out by work and loss of sleep, I was in a state of complete indifference as to what happened.

A Dinner Engagement

"Siebold stood by while I shot my bolt; then astonished me by asking if I would go out to dinner with him that evening. I asked him why on earth such an invitation. 'Well, Hurst,' he replied, 'only because I like you and want to talk things over with you,'—adding—'after your temperature has dropped to normal.'

"That dinner engagement was a turning point in my career. Siebold began by affirming confidence in my ability. He told me I was capable of better things, but warned that I'd have to change both my attitude and working habits if I ever expected to be a real illustrator. He asked me if I thought the job I'd just delivered to him was my best work. Of course I had to admit it was not, but I defended myself by reminding him that I had a family to support and had to turn out as many jobs as possible.

Earl Oliver Hurst practically completes his drawings in line before applying color washes. For both his line work and color he uses waterproof inks

The Siebold Plan

"'Here is what I want you to do, Hurst,' he said, 'I want you to promise me that in the future you will make not one drawing for each assignment, but three or four, then deliver the best one of the lot.' I was aghast at such a proposal, which, if accepted, would reduce my income by at least two thirds. But Siebold kept right at me, rushed me like a salesman trying to sell a bill of goods. Finally I weakened, and agreed to try out his cockeyed idea just as soon as I could save up enough money for reasonable security while doing it. Apparently not quite convinced of my sincerity he insisted we shake hands on the pact.

"For the next six months things went on as formerly. Then one day I called Siebold on the telephone. 'Chet,' I said, 'today I go off the deep end with that crazy idea of yours that we shook hands on some months ago.' I had determined to give his proposal at least a trial. I made five finished drawings of my first assignment under this plan. Not until then had I realized the soundness of Siebold's advice—and the slimness of my income under this arrangement. As I examined those five drawings, standing against my studio wall, I was really shocked to think that according to former procedure I would have delivered the first one, truly a fumbling performance compared with the subsequent drawings. From then on I followed Siebold's plan religiously. In a few months I had justified its author's faith in me and the great wisdom of his advice—I was soon doing far more important work than had ever come to me preceding my move to New York."

Still a Good Plan

To this day Hurst has honored the pact made with a handclasp over that dinner table years ago. He doesn't make three or four trials as formerly, but there are at least two drawings for every job. Sometimes he will completely finish both of them; at other times he will carry only one beyond the line rendering; after all, in a Hurst drawing, it is the quality of the line that counts. Line is the dominant element in his work, a factor which might not be at once obvious to one who is first struck by his effective massing of vivacious color. Examine any of his illustrations critically and you will realize that while his color is essential to effective dramatization of the idea, it is really supplementary to a remarkably expressive line. Study Hurst's line carefully. You will see how it fluctuates, now full and lush as it accents some dominant action, now delicate as it defines a subtle bit of expression; but always sensitive, directed by complete knowledge and technical mastery. You will never find a deliberately drawn line in a Hurst illustration: only a swift moving brush will produce that sense of aliveness which is the essential characteristic of his work.

Hurst in Action

Our photograph shows Hurst in characteristic action as he starts an illustration. He fills sheet after sheet of tracing paper with vigorous pencil drawings. The first, torn from the pad, falls to the floor; another soon follows. After an hour or two the studio becomes littered with these experiments—all in line—to express the idea he is trying to put over. Not until his conception matures does Hurst take up his brush and

begin his final drawings on heavy watercolor paper. The painting of the final picture doesn't take long.

Hurst's manner of working varies. While he will often resort to the preparatory experiments already described, at other times his drawing is so completely visualized that he takes up his brush at the outset without having made a single pencil study on tissue. Much of his best work has been produced in this spontaneous manner. In whatever way he proceeds on his drawing board, the bulk of his creative effort has already been accomplished before he touches brush or pencil. His kind of "idea" illustration—"gag" is really too superficial a term for it—implies keen perception constantly on the alert. Most, though not all, of the ideas for his cover drawings are his own. Sometimes the art editor produces one. In either event the idea is discussed with the art editor before it gets on paper. Then comes a rough sketch which, if acceptable, is followed by a finished drawing. Hurst's sketches are very rough but he suggests that an artist whose work is not known to the art editor would do better to submit a finished drawing at the outset.

It's a Business

Illustrating for magazines and for advertising is a business as well as an art. You will find the successful illustrator capably organized to meet the exacting demands of art directors and editors who in turn are under the pressures of modern industry. Assignments have a way of coming in bunches, with utter disregard for the artist's convenience. A ten-day deadline for a story is automatically reduced when the ringing of the telephone heralds the arrival of another. Then there are those unscheduled stories which can't be put off indefinitely. Hurst says he works best under such pressure, but without efficient organization he could not satisfy his clients. His capable assistant, seen in the background of his studio, does many things to save his employer's time. Research is one of his important tasks. He is contact man between artist and art director. He acts as secretary; he mats and delivers drawings. Hurst's second assistant, also in the photograph, must not be overlooked. Shag, his scotty, takes up his post when his master begins work, and is ever alert to retrieve erasers and pencils which fall from the drawing board.

Inks and Models

Hurst renders his drawings with waterproof inks: black for the line work, and colored inks for the washes. As has already been stated, he very nearly completes his line drawing before applying color. Where the color washes flow over the black ink lines they soften them. When pure black lines are wanted, perhaps in the foreground, Hurst leaves those lines until the last, drawing them on top of the washes. He never attempts to go over a line to strengthen it; in doing that, he declares, he would lose what he most prizes—spontaneity. He likes colored inks because, he declares, one tone can be applied over another without losing the freshness of the wash, and one can work back into them without their getting messy.

Speaking of models and photographs, Hurst explains that direct use of either of these aids is of little use in his type of work. They are even likely to get in the way of his original conception. "In casting characters for a story," he says, "I never expect to find types in a model. Types for any given situation have to be created from memory and imagination. The only model I used for *Surprise in Armour* was Al, my assistant, who posed for both the colonel and the rookies. In

every illustration I first put down on paper, in pencil, my impression of the entire job, no matter how poorly conceived or how far from fact it really is. I keep that before me from first to last because this first impression is usually the one I want to carry through to the finished drawing."

Art Training

Hurst received his art training over a long period of years while he was a breadwinner. He studied in the evening classes of the Albright Art School in Buffalo; then in France at the University of Beaune—this at the conclusion of front-line service in the A. E. F. in the first World War; and, while he was working nights, off and on, on the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, in the day classes of the Cleveland School of Art. For seven years after his marriage he continued spare time study. He believes that art school training is certainly desirable in spite of the success of many artists who have been denied its benefits. "But," he adds, "success as an illustrator depends more upon what you are at the outset than upon any kind of art training."

Postscript

After the above Hurst story was written, the manuscript was sent to Mr. Hurst for his reading and correction. The following note accompanied the ms on its return:

Dear Mr. Editor: You refer to me as a humorist. A humorist to me is a professional funny-man, who, for a consideration, sets out to convulse us with laughter. No, I don't think I want to be called a humorist! I do enjoy life. It is one continual exciting adventure. Perhaps I have never grown up (Edna says she is sure of it). I think perhaps I have retained a boyhood zest for living, possibly due to that nightmare experience of keeping body and soul together in those lean early days. It is true that I did go through a very seamy side of life for several years, through the sudden loss of a beautiful and bountiful home life. I dug ditches, mixed concrete by hand, waited table, worked in machine shops, drafting with the Curtiss Aeroplane Co., was a deckhand, and then engineer on a small freight boat, and many other jobs in that interlude between school days and studio days. Perhaps through those very contacts with people from all classes a greater understanding of the other fellow was only natural. I found that the fellow digging a ditch and the millionaire are not so different.

To which we reply:

Dear Earl Oliver: If you consider that Will Rogers was a "funny man"—we mentioned him and you in the same breath—I'll agree with your complaint that we have tagged you incorrectly. Fred Allen is a funny man; so are Jack Benny, Al Pearce and Costello. Between these wise-cracking comedians and the subtle humor of Will Rogers (and Earl Oliver Hurst) there is a gulf both broad and deep. No, Earl, we refuse to re-classify you. To us you are a humorist, thank God!

★ ★ ★

In March, V. Bobri, a remarkably versatile and original artist, will be the subject of our interview. Among other artists to follow are Dean Cornwell, Harvey Dunn, John Atherton, Amos Sewell, Albert Staehle, and Dorothy Lathrop.

Among the painters to be featured in future numbers are Charles Burchfield, Eugene Speicher, Paul Sample, Ogden Pleissner, Leon Kroll, Robert Brackman, John F. Carlson and Andrew Wyeth, all with color reproductions.

STOP + LOOK + BUY

Window Displays by Ruth Soloway

ALONG MAIN STREET everywhere in America, the brightly lighted windows of the shops still shine—if we except occasional experimental blackouts—as a line of morale defense in a world where true blackouts have long been the style. These lighted windows not only give us a feeling of safety but they assure the people that there is still enough to buy and possess, whether it be clothing or food. Therefore the windows of America serve as beacons of assurance to bolster the spirits of the populace.

In a field not yet overcrowded with super-specialists, the work of Ruth Soloway holds a unique place. Working independently in a large, well-lighted studio on lower Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, she fashions some of New York's finest window displays. It is her problem to present with esthetic effectiveness the articles that are to be sold; and the photos of the work shown here are excellent examples of how thoroughly she understands her craft. From the rough sketch to the finished product Miss Soloway controls the entire procedure. On paper it looks simple; first the rough sketch of the idea, then the construc-



The two I Miller & Sons windows at the bottom of these facing pages were prize winners in the 1941 Fifth Avenue Association Christmas Window Awards. The figures were made of papier mache, costumed in crepe paper, with realistic details of fur, ribbon, etc. The accessories are constructed from wood, upholstered materials, fabrics, miniature antiques, photostats of library plates and many other assembled details

This display was made for Milk Maid products. The figure was moulded from papier mache. The clothes were actually sewed and made to fit the model, then dipped in wet plaster. And while the plaster was hardening, the material was moulded appropriately on the figure, the folds intensified to achieve the feeling of spontaneity and freshness shown in the photograph. The cow was created in much the same manner and then colored. The accessories were constructed and put in place to resemble an old porcelain group





FRANKLIN SIMON'S
TRADITIONAL
AMERICAN WAY
WINDOWS

One of a series representing different parts of the country; this is a replica of a typical early New England country store. The background and accessories — containers, brooms, hardware, and so forth—were actual materials gathered together from innumerable sources and properly assembled and lighted to create an authentic atmosphere

tion of the sets, finally the installation and lighting, and the curtain goes up. Yes, it looks simple, but let us take a tour through the studio itself and see how it is actually done, beginning with the sketch which in itself, however rough, must show clearly the idea at hand. From there we go to the actual planning and building of the window set which in many respects is akin to a theatrical or stage set. The space that is devoted to the window display is visualized. From that point on the things that are to go into it must be so planned and arranged as to be displayed at the peak of their effectiveness. The building of parts of that set necessitates everything from detailed research to the intelligent use of a band-saw. And—because of the necessarily limited hours oftentimes allotted to



This manner of presenting a sketch for the original conception of a window display is characteristic of Miss Soloway's approach to her various problems. Rarely if ever is a window display sketch carried further by her. You will notice in this sketch, and the two on page 13, the complete absence of a third dimension or any feeling that these sketches will ultimately grow into a smart window display





One of Miss Soloway's interesting jobs was the designing and construction of twelve dog groups for Altman's. Above is a photograph of an armature of wood and mesh wire similar to one that a sculptor would construct as a basis for his modeling. Even this framework must establish the animal's character and posture. Over the armature the modeling is done by applying moist pieces of paper in much the same way theatrical masks are constructed. The painting follows



Accurate copy is consulted so that there shall be no mistake either in the coloration or character of the dog represented. Inasmuch as there were twelve different dog displays, each of a different breed, the work involved was prodigious. Not only that, the time element was an important factor, as it usually is in the designing and construction of window displays for large metropolitan stores



Our illustration shows the Dalmatian in his landscape setting. In each set the background was designed with a view of suitability for the breed of dog represented

the construction of a display—nerve-racking and back-breaking hours are crammed within a short space of time. When we behold a window we see only the beauty and the glamour of it; rarely if ever do we stop to consider, or understand, the intensive effort which, like everything else that is thorough and good, has gone into the building of it. Miss Soloway works directly and with great simplicity. She understands her craft thoroughly and is therefore able to produce these effects with the minimum of hubbub and the maximum of intelligent application, which is just another word for good craftsmanship.



The photograph below shows one of a group, designed by Miss Soloway for Bonwit Teller, symbolizing sand sculpture. The hand was constructed of moist paper and paste over an armature of chicken wire. Its surface was painted a sand color and given a dusting of real sand. The whole was embedded in an area of sand; and the proper accessories added to display and enhance the merchandise. Thus the effect of sunlight on a sandy beach was successfully created to sell beachwear



All photographs by Worsinger

An Appreciation

The National Council for Art Week 1941 wishes publicly to extend its congratulations and appreciation to President and Mrs. Roosevelt—America's first patrons of the arts—for their foresight and courage in sponsoring Art Week, and to thank the 6,000 men and women who have given their time to the success of this great volunteer effort.

Art Week has already demonstrated what can be accomplished in our democracy through the generous volunteer efforts of many thousands of our citizens. It provided millions of persons throughout the nation with an opportunity to see, and enjoy, and to purchase the works of artists and craftsmen living and creating among them.

The creative arts are a symbol and expression of the freedom of the individual. We are fighting for that freedom today; therefore, we recognize at this time the essential value of our cultural arts, and we are determined to safeguard them.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ART WEEK 1941

Gladys Rockmore Davis

Her Adventure in Pastel

There have been few women artists in America who have attained the success that Gladys Rockmore Davis enjoys today, just ten years after she began to paint. Ten years is a short time in the development of a career, especially when the responsibilities of a home and two young children claim their share of time, thought and energy. Yet during that decade Mrs. Davis has been as prolific in her painting as many artists whose art wholly commands their attention.

But it is not quantity that concerns us, no matter how greatly we may marvel at the sheer accomplishment of producing so many canvases. The early pictures she exhibited bore the imprint of originality and gave promise of what was to come; it was evident she was a person to watch. By the time of her first one-man show in New York in 1940 she had won her place in the front ranks of American art.

Perhaps it is misleading to designate the year 1932 as the beginning of Mrs. Davis' career—that is when she began to paint—because for eleven years previously she had been a very successful advertising and fashion artist. Thus there was behind her a considerable experience which, while not usually considered a promising kind of background for a painting career, appears to have equipped this artist with sound skills which she successfully applied to the problems of easel painting.

The transition from fashion artist is interesting and involves a bit of history. In 1925, five years after her graduation from the Art Institute of Chicago, she married Floyd M. Davis, who, even then, was a well-known illustrator and advertising artist. They moved to New York where two children arrived ten and eleven years ago. Mrs. Davis continued her fashion work until 1932 when, with bag, baggage, babies and nurse, the Davises sailed for Europe. After touring about for a few months they settled in Cannes, quite near the house in Le Cannet where Renoir spent the last twenty-five years of his life. The visits to the Renoir home and studio made a lasting impression; the great Frenchman has been a noticeable influence upon Mrs. Davis' work.

At Cannes she took up her brushes and painted steadily until the family returned to America a year later. "I discovered, to my surprise," she recalls, "that I had completely lost my flair for commercial work. After

floundering for a couple of months I decided to attend the Art Students League of New York. There I spent several more months studying, painting and thoroughly enjoying myself. Following that I studied for a time with George Grosz. Then I threw away all leading strings and plunged myself into the strange world of painting."

Mrs. Davis had not been painting long before the critics noted that a new star had appeared in the firmament of the art world. In 1937 the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired her *August Afternoon*, an important landmark in her rapidly developing career. Since then her work has been reproduced continuously. She was the subject of a feature article in the January 1940 number of *Magazine of Art*.

BRILLIANT PASTELS

Gladys Rockmore Davis scores with her outstanding work in this medium

These are the words with which one of New York's newspaper critics hailed the opening of Mrs. Davis' exhibition of pastels in November 1941 at the Midtown Galleries. Another critic wrote—"She handles pastel very much the same way she uses oils, getting a lush richness and Renoir-like glow in the colors. Also the subjects that are the most successful are those that have given her oil paintings such distinction—pensive girls and young women in natural, unposed attitudes." "In none of her pastels," observed another, "is there a hint of the pale lavenders, the feminine pinks usually associated with the word 'pastel.' The chalk medium has responded to her love of strong, rich color."

The pastels seen in this exhibition, executed during the past year, represent the artist's first work in the medium. And now, after this brief but highly successful excursion in the new medium, she has laid aside her chalks to take up her familiar brush once more. What prompted this pastel period? She was attracted to the medium, she declares, because it enables the artist to execute, in a few days, a portrait which, in oil, would occupy several weeks of continuous painting. A portrait commission in pastel, it follows, is not quite such an expensive luxury, is within the means of a wider public.

The use of pastel as



SALLY • PASTEL
Gladys Rockmore Davis



TORSO
by
Gladys
Rockmore
Davis

a *painting* medium has always been pretty much confined to such casual undertakings, principally in the field of portraiture. It has not generally been looked upon as a medium for serious work, in spite of the achievements of not a few fine artists who have devoted themselves to it. Rosalba Carriera of Venice (1675-1757), who was one of the first to carry the art to perfection, is represented in the Dresden Museum by 157 of her pastel portraits. Quentin de la Tour (1704-1788), the most eminent pastellist France has produced, painted a great many notable portraits. Hogarth, Sir Thomas Lawrence and George Romney, among English artists, turned occasionally to the pastel medium. Mary Cassatt, that distinguished American painter with whom Mrs. Davis has been compared—merely because of her fondness for the mother and child theme—was particularly successful with pastel.

Pastel has been quite extensively employed as a *drawing* medium. One recalls Degas' innumerable studies of ballet dancers. Many of these are slight enough to be designated drawings; others were executed with a completeness approaching that of an oil painting. In the former the chalk has been chiefly used for delineation with no more than a suggestion of color; the paper, usually tinted, being a strong tonal factor in the result. In the latter the paper was often

covered, or nearly so, and the chalks were handled in a painter-like manner.

Mrs. Davis' pastels are definitely paintings. She pretty much eliminates the paper as a color element even though she doesn't cover it all the way to the frame. She prefers fullness of representation to mere suggestion. Always a vigorous painter, known for her sculptural form and warm, glowing color, she succeeds in retaining these characteristics in pastel. She complains that the chalks do not give her quite the lush reds she is so fond of, but to critics of her sometimes too "hot" color this would seem to be a wholesome corrective.

In referring to these pictures as paintings we would not give the impression that Mrs. Davis, in her pastels, imitates oil painting technic. She fully appreciates the distinctive characteristics of the medium and exploits them intelligently; she does not attempt to force it beyond its natural limitations.

In turning from oils to pastels the painter has to adjust himself to the wholly different properties of the chalk medium. First to be noted, perhaps, is the extensive range of the pastel palette. Instead of a dozen oil colors which, through mixtures, supply his every need, he must have at hand between 150 and 250 sticks of chalk. Because the possibility of mixing

(Continued on page 21)



GIRL ARRANGING FLOWERS

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PASTEL BY GLADYS ROCKMORE DAVIS



GLADYS ROCKMORE DAVIS
PAINTS A PASTEL

The three reproductions on this page present a record of procedure in the painting of a pastel portrait. The finished picture is reproduced in halftone on the page opposite. Below, Mrs. Davis is securing her paper to a drawing board by means of scotch tape

Monroe Carrington photo





PASTEL PORTRAIT BY GLADYS ROCKMORE DAVIS

The painting was done on a warm gray paper, 20x28 inches



NOEL • PASTEL



DEBORAH AND NOEL
IN REAL LIFE

Two of several pencil drawings made as composition studies for the oil painting, "Emma." This is the only kind of preliminary study (on paper) that precedes Mrs. Davis' direct painting either in pastel or oil



DEBORAH • OIL

REPRODUCTIONS OF ALL
PASTELS AND PAINTINGS
BY COURTESY
MIDTOWN GALLERIES



American Artist



EMMA •

OIL PAINTING BY GLADYS ROCKMORE DAVIS

pastel hues on paper is very limited the manufacturer has anticipated nearly every color need including, of course, the greatest variety of warm and cool grays. Pastels are usually arranged in a series of tones, the darkest ones consisting of pure color; the others of the series are mixed with white to a greater and greater degree as they ascend the scale toward the lightest.

Because the colors cannot readily be mixed and because the paper will hold but a limited amount of pigment, work in pastel has to be very direct. A certain amount of rubbing with fingers or stump is possible, but the juxtaposition of colors and hatching give a more vibrant result. A certain amount of impasto may be desired here and there to suggest flesh quality. This, with reserve, is seen in Mrs. Davis' portraits; but most of her picture surfaces are built up without

rubbing or excessive piling up of chalk which is always applied as thinly as possible so that, as in watercolor, the paper itself may play some part in the effect.

There is considerable flexibility in the medium; parts of the picture can readily be wiped out with a rag and the detail reconstructed. But every such treatment reduces the freshness of the work and a new start on a fresh piece of paper is more practical if one gets into any considerable difficulty.

Perhaps the chief reason why pastels are not in more general favor is the fact that their life is precarious unless they are handled with extreme care. The chalks do not have the cohesion of oil pigments and a chance rubbing may well do great damage to a picture. To offset this disadvantage pastels promise even greater permanence than oils, being free from oils and varnishes which cause paintings to darken,



AUGUST AFTERNOON • OIL PAINTING BY GLADYS ROCKMORE DAVIS

grow yellow and crack. Once pastels are properly framed they will retain their original bloom indefinitely, as pastels painted two centuries ago have done.

As soon as Mrs. Davis completes a picture she covers it with cellophane to protect it until it is put safely behind glass by the framer. A little chalk dusts off on the cellophane but not enough to injure the surface. As a matter of fact it is advisable to tap the pastel gently on its back to free it of superfluous dust which might otherwise drop off the picture after it is in the frame.

The use of fixatif to prevent the rubbing of pastel is highly unsatisfactory; in fact it will spoil the picture, darkening the tones and destroying the bloom which is one of its principal charms. However, a moderate use of fixatif, while the picture is in progress, may be desirable. For example, Mrs. Davis sprays the picture slightly when it has reached a condition comparable to the second state in the series shown here. This "sets" the chalk somewhat, making it more receptive to further applications of pigment.

There are special pastel papers prepared with pumice or other abrasives intended to attract and hold the chalk. Mrs. Davis doesn't like these—few pro-

fessionals do—but uses a heavy, tinted paper, hard-surfaced but with sufficient tooth to take the chalk. Paper is a most important factor in pastel work and every artist experiments to discover the surface best suited to his individual needs.

Mrs. Davis conceives her pictures in color and mass rather than in line. This observation may seem to be refuted by the pencil drawings in line which represent her only preliminary studies on paper. But these drawings only serve the purpose of composition study, of searching for the right pose. That once established, she begins the massing of colors and tones after lightly indicating, in line, the placing of the figures. Having quite completely conceived the composition before starting, she works all over the picture at once until it is completed.

As might be expected, Mrs. Davis uses her children Deborah (Sissy) and Noel (Tuffy) for models. They are the subjects of some of her best pictures. The many paintings of nudes and semi-nudes testify to her love of painting "flesh infused with the glow of life."

Mrs. Davis' career has just begun. Her future work will be followed with the anticipation one feels in watching the unfolding of great talent.

WE-ALL

The Japanese attack on the United States instantly changed our trend of thought in this country.

Before that attack some of us thought in terms of "I", others in terms of "we". Neither of those terms expresses our feelings today.

"I" represents only one person.

"We" may mean only two or a few persons.

Our slogan now is WE-ALL, which means every loyal individual in the United States.

We are facing a long, hard job, but when the United States decides to fight for a cause, it is in terms of WE-ALL, and nothing can or will stop us.

President Roosevelt, our Commander-in-Chief, can be certain that WE-ALL are back of him, determined to protect our country, our form of government, and the freedoms which we cherish.



President,

International Business Machines Corporation

More about SOFT GROUND ETCHING

By
JAMES SWANN

James Swann, president of the Chicago Society of Etchers, read Joseph Margulies' article on soft ground etching in our December number; noted points of difference in Margulies' and his own procedures; gathered up drawings and proofs of three "states" of his soft ground etching "Mexican Laundry" and put them in the mail for AMERICAN ARTIST. The following comments by Mr. Swann, quoted from his letter, explain his disagreement with Mr. Margulies, and the illustrations demonstrate his own methods.

First we reprint a passage from the Margulies text which refers to the disputed points:

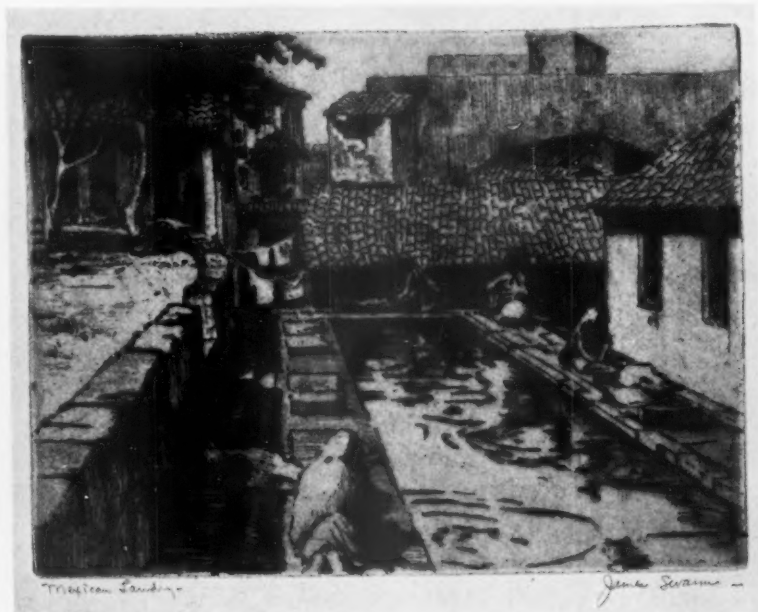
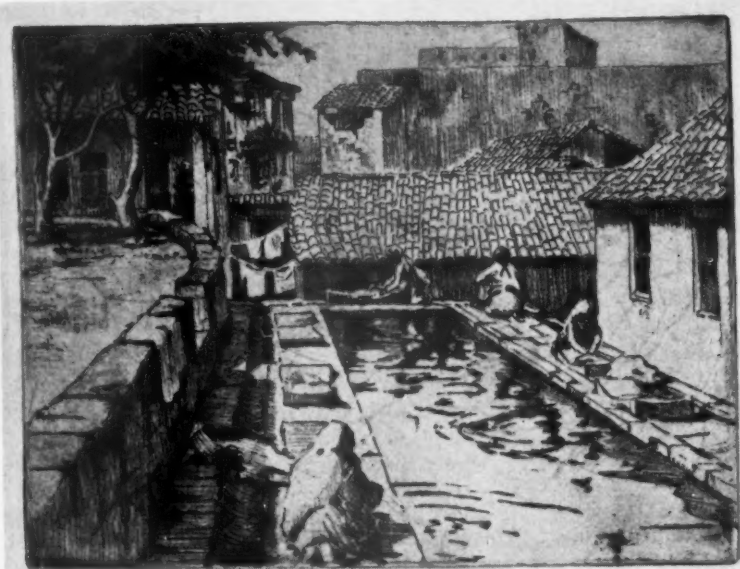
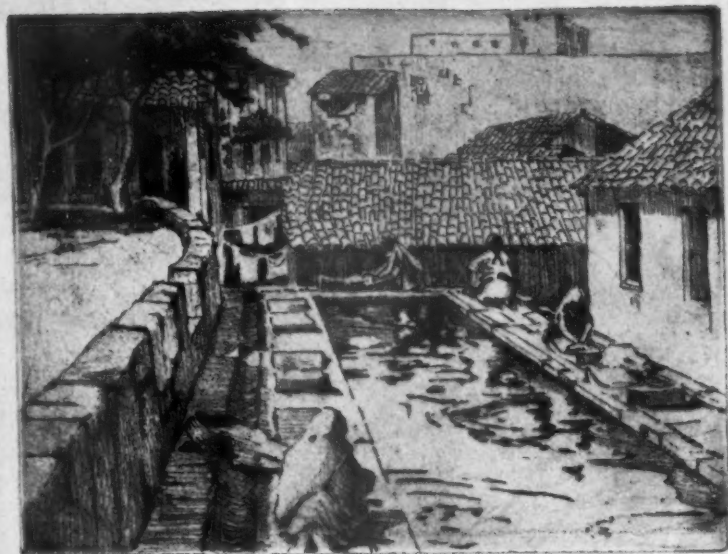
"Yes, soft ground looks easy. Yet there are few American etchers who have the skill or the patience it demands. A contradiction? Not when it is known how tricky the entire process really is. The ground itself is tricky; it may be applied eight or ten times before a satisfactory ground is produced. The drawing which looks so simple may not be acting on the ground properly unless it is done with a skill earned by persistent trial and error and the loss of innumerable plates. Even then an expert etcher is gambling when he starts a soft ground etching.

"The point is, that once the plate is etched it is either a success or a failure. If it is not right, about all that can be done is to throw it away and start all over again. Passages can, it is true, be lightened here and there by burnishing, but there is no such thing as re-etching to get deeper blacks, no developing of the plate through a progression of states."

Now for Mr. Swann's letter:

"In the December issue of AMERICAN ARTIST I read with much interest the article by Joseph Margulies on soft ground etching. Realizing as I do that Mr. Margulies has been etching much





longer than I have and has made many, many more soft ground plates, I was surprised by the statement in the third paragraph of his discussion: '... there is no such thing as re-biting to get deeper blacks, no developing of the plate through a progression of states.'

"Of the few soft ground plates that I have made, not one of them came out of the first biting the way I wanted it. I had to re-bite them at least three times and sometimes more.

"It is true that if an etcher uses a thick opaque paper it would be impossible to see through it and add lines to the plate. I enclose herewith three tracings and three proofs showing the areas that have been drawn and re-bitten. When the plate is ground the second time and covered with a clean sheet of architectural tracing paper, it is possible to see quite clearly the lines that have been bitten in the first bath; and additional lines and areas may be strengthened and bitten deeper as the third proof shows. As in straight etching, only the lines drawn the second time are touched by the acid.

"Then in the thirteenth paragraph, Mr. Margulies mentions that no stopping-out is used. On lines or areas that I want to print pure white, I stop-out before the plate is placed in the acid the first time... then if I see certain places on the plate that have been bitten enough, I stop them out and put the plate back in the acid."

In comparing the first tracing with the first state of the etching, directly opposite, and then noting the subsequent treatments of the plate—as indicated by the second and third tracings—it will be seen how Mr. Swann, through re-biting and stopping-out, has developed his design from the first state at the top of the right column to the finished plate at the bottom.

* * *

The Chicago Society of Etchers, of which James Swann is president, was founded in 1910. It is one of America's most important art societies. It has approximately 150 active artist members and 350 associate members; and is international in scope as its members reside in all parts of the United States and in foreign countries—England, France, India, Hawaii, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Exhibitions of members' work are held in Chicago in April and October.

Industry's Challenge to the Artist



2nd *In a series of 3 articles on new materials and processes which science and industry offer the artist for the extension of his creative horizon*

by Domenico Mortellito

FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY plastics have been made and used in industrial work, but little or nothing has been done by the artist with this material as a medium of creative expression until several years ago. At the New York World's Fair a number of corporations producing and utilizing plastics gave the artist a splendid opportunity to use their products for the creation of mural decorations, architectural sculptures and industrial designs.

These new mediums, with properties hitherto unknown, opened new decorative horizons for the creative artist. What came out of these experiments with plastics is of more than casual interest to the art profession.

Plastics can be completely transparent, a water-white clear film, or they can have deep opaque or "mineral-like" quality. They also come in unlimited colors, textures and tonal values. Added to this they have the property of carrying and conveying light and afford freedom in the application of both transparent and opaque dyes. They can also be combined with innumerable metallic and crystallic substances. They give the artist complete freedom to handle his decoration in almost any form he can possibly conceive.

Plastics, as used by a number of artists today, are obtainable in pieces, sheets, rods, blocks, films, and odd shapes which can be cast or moulded up to certain sizes and extruded into multi-formed strips. A comprehensive and intelligent application of these plastics is in itself an extensive and unlimited job for competent creative genius.

And from the knowledge of these various plastics one can move into a still more exciting field of endeavor—the combining and fitting of plastics with other materials and the making of one's own particular plastic compound to produce effects desired.

Since plastics can be obtained in liquid form, or in

semi-hard, or hard state they can be sprayed, poured, troweled or applied to practically any surface and can be combined with other materials. By application to large glass, metallic or meshed surfaces they can be treated as a structural piece—transparent, translucent, or opaque.

Plastic on Glass: An interesting application of this medium is the use of an acrylic resin plastic to large sheets of glass similar to display window glass. By spraying in successive layers, or by troweling, one may obtain any thickness desired. After this result has been achieved, the surface can be carved in low relief and finished as a mono-chrome bas-relief; or if desired the carving can be polychromed. By regulating the depth of his carving and by installing light behind this plastic on glass, the artist can obtain an effect of carved light coming through an opaque or translucent surface; the deeper the carving the brighter the light.

I am now working on a mural of this type to go in a dining salon on the U. S. Maritime Commission's *South African Planet*. It is particularly fitting in such a situation where passengers on a 27-day voyage will be likely to appreciate whatever variety may be given their surroundings. During the day the mural will register as a bas-relief, in effect not unlike the sculptured and colored stone-cut decorations of the Egyptians. At night the panels will have a wholly different effect, as the artificial illumination from the rear transforms them into a pattern of light and produces a warm translucent glow.

Lacquers on Glass: Lacquers have been known to the art world for centuries; particularly in the Orient where the Chinese and Japanese have employed them with great effectiveness. Modern industry has given us new types of lacquers. There are synthetic resins, luminous dyes and the necessary protective coatings for the insulation of metals, wood, rubber and other materials.





It would take too many pages for the enumeration and classification of these new lacquers. All I can point out here is the usefulness of lacquers in architectural problems which so often arise, in public buildings and in private dwellings alike, where it is desired to embellish large glass areas. Lacquer is a good substitute for carved, etched, sand-blasted or colored glass in situations where size or structural factors make these processes impractical. The artist can apply lacquers directly to the glass while it is in place. They can be sprayed, painted, scribed, scratched or stenciled. They can be built up to give a relief effect.

Continued on page 28



The cut below and the one on the page opposite show two aspects of a plastic on glass, carved panel for the U. S. Maritime Commission's "South African Planet." One photograph was taken in daylight; the other at night, illuminated from behind.

Mortellito sprays lacquer on glass in producing a window display for Jay Thorpe of New York—entire window above. In his hand he holds a cardboard mask, one of several cut in a variety of shapes permitting a wide range of contours.





Dohanos first charts his course for a research journey.

Stevan Dohanos

PAINTS WITH POWER

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INDUSTRY'S CHALLENGE

Continued from page 27

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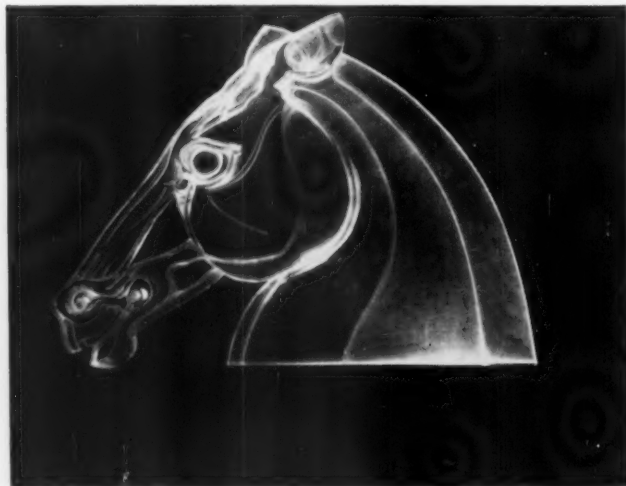
Because lacquer on glass does not involve the technical skills involved in other glass treatments such as carving, etching and sand-blasting, it can be effectively employed by any artist.

Plastic Compounds: Plastic compounds are new. There are a great many plastic compositions which can be poured into shapes, troweled like plaster and carved. These are classified as *cold poured plastics*. They have a great range of inherent qualities which are not obtainable in any other mediums used for sculpture, cast forms, moulded shapes, or machined forms. These qualities range from a water-white, crystal clearness down through all the colors and opacities. One can also obtain innumerable effects in cold poured plastic by combining plastic granules, metallic chips, or plastic with luminous or mineral substances. Mortars can be mixed and poured into accurate molds of approximate forms which can then be carved like stone, wood, or plaster. Because clear plastic compounds can be fabricated this way it is possible to install fixed or attached light sources which give sculpture the quality of containing its own light. The structural strength and resiliency of cold poured plastics are also factors in its usefulness.

The relative lightness of this material is another claim to its superiority over bronze and stone. And unlike wood and plaster it is free from the danger of checking, cracking and chipping.

It is impossible to visualize the properties of these various materials and technics without actually seeing them. Words and halftone reproductions are quite inadequate. All I can hope to do is to call the readers' attention to the opportunities they afford and to testify through my own experience that they are a happy hunting ground for the artist with a pioneering instinct.

Detailed information about the materials discussed in this and other articles of the series can be obtained from E. I. Du Pont De Nemours & Co., 350 Fifth Avenue, New York; Hercules Powder Company, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, and Dow Chemical Company, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York.



An example of cold poured plastic sculpture by Mortellito. The light, in the ebony base, is transmitted throughout the transparent form.

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More About Medical Art

In our December, 1940 issue we printed an article, "MEDICAL ART—A Constant Art Market" which was sent to us by New York University. This article has attracted a lot of attention: letters of inquiry from readers who are interested in medical art as a possible outlet for their talents; and letters of complaint from medical artists who state that the article is grossly misleading.

The first letter came from Mr. John Gilmore of Staten Island, New York, who went to some length to explain that the "medical artist should have a background of anatomy, histology, physiology, some pathology, the basic principles of surgery, and, most important, he must have an adequate knowledge of medical terminology in order to be an effective medical artist."

A letter from Mr. Patric Claiborne, medical artist, Columbia Medical Building, Washington, D. C., refers to the article as "utterly ridiculous" in its claim that "an artist needs no special training . . . can do the work after hours . . . can make such a hobby into the lucrative paying class" and "offers an artist a fascinating way of supplementing his work while at the same time leaving him free to pursue his own creative work."

At Mr. Gilmore's suggestion we submitted the article to Dr. Robert L. Dickinson, a distinguished physician who began illustrating books and articles as an interne sixty years ago. It would seem that we could have no better authority than Dr. Dickinson's, and we are grateful to him for permission to quote from his letter.

Says Dr. Dickinson:

"Mr. Gilmore's protest concerning the claims made in your article, 'MEDICAL ART—A Constant Art Market,' are well founded. An architect cannot plan buildings without knowing structural materials. A landscapist cannot picture trees and rocks, mountains and churches without having seen them. No artist could picture interiors who had never seen interiors, or good photographs thereof. The medical artist who has not made a rather long and detailed study of tissues—of bones and muscles and bowels and nerves; who does not know his way about in the authoritative volumes on normal anatomy and microscopic anatomy; who is not familiar with the appearance of pathologic processes such as tumors or the results of fractures—cannot produce decent work. The physician will not take the trouble to make selection of the best previous pictures to guide the artist. The physician only rarely can even sketch what he wants drawn, or correct errors. The physician is practically never willing to pay for the time the artist should take to hunt good originals, nor to go to the library with the medical artist to help him hunt. As for the large pharmaceutical houses, they are looking for illustrations that are smooth and pretty, and they will rarely pay the artist for acquiring special knowledge and pursuing studies which will enable him to produce pictures which are also anatomically correct.

"I speak whereof I do know, for I began illustrating books and articles as a medical student and interne sixty years ago. Thereafter I trained Pratt Institute Art Department graduates and returned Beaux Arts students—often five at a time—for years before Max Brödel took up his work. I have illustrated my own books and atlases. The Dickinson-Belskie sculptures, the Birth Series at the World's Fair, drew 5,000 a

(Continued on page 34)

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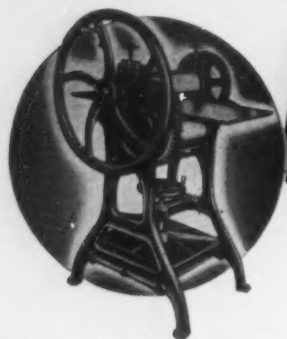
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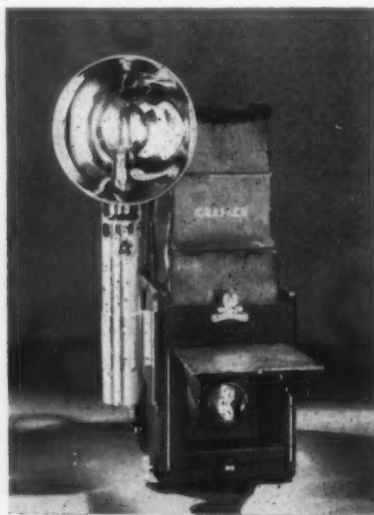
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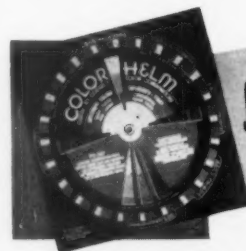
1942 DIRECTORY OF SUMMER ART SCHOOLS AND CLASSES

So many inquiries have been received from readers regarding summer art classes to be held in 1942 that AMERICAN ARTIST will publish as complete a directory of these as it is possible to compile. This will be divided into three parts, each covering a particular geographical section of the country. We hope to publish one section in the March issue, a second section in the April issue and the third section in the May issue.

All schools and teachers planning to hold summer classes are urged to immediately send us information about them. This should include the name of the school or class, the address where the school or class will be held, the opening and closing date, and the name and address of the person to whom inquiries should be sent. There is no charge or obligation to the school or teacher for listing in the directory.

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MORE ABOUT MEDICAL ART

Continued from page 30

day through the turnstiles after a 20-minute wait. My location (for 16 years) at the New York Academy of Medicine, in which is housed the most useful medical library in the world—as several tours into European medical centers and those of our own hemisphere have shown me—makes me constantly aware of the need and demand for medical illustration.

"The late Max Brödel, professor of art at Johns Hopkins University, attained the rank of our greatest medical artist, not alone because of his consummate skill, but also because of the Teutonic thoroughness he had brought to his work. Operations are conducted swiftly, the field is often deep and rather small. No pause can be made for the sketch. The protograph does not depict cavities well, or blood color of muscles, or minute details. The artist who is not well-trained in anatomy and pathological appearances cannot make accurate "on the spot" drawings.

"A few high fees have been paid—but very few; and since the depression they have been scant indeed. The publication of medical books is already dropping off sharply. Artists forget that it is the doctor who has to pay for the pictures accompanying his article—very seldom does the publisher assume this expense. Few medical schools in universities pay salaries to artists.

"The number of skilled and well-grounded medical artists in this part of the world, or in our chief cities, considerably exceeds the demand, as far as my experience goes. For many years I have been keeping a list of such artists who sought my aid in getting work. If orders for medical illustrating were given to well-qualified men and women, instead of being turned over by commercial firms to advertising artists, and if their hard-won knowledge of anatomy and the various steps of operative procedures was rewarded by fees commensurate with its worth, there would be a remunerative—though restricted—field for this specialized branch of art. Some day appreciation—such as once existed in Germany—is bound to come to our own country.

"To sum up: The medical artist must know every step of the operation as well as the operator does, in order to picture it. And with all emphasis I declare that the artist must know the anatomy he draws five times as well as the anatomical writer, who has only to put it into words and dimensions."

In conclusion, the Editors assume responsibility for the sub-title, "A Constant Art Market." It seems to be justly implied by the article itself.

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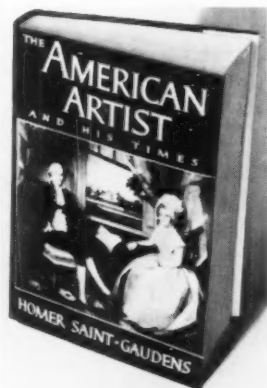
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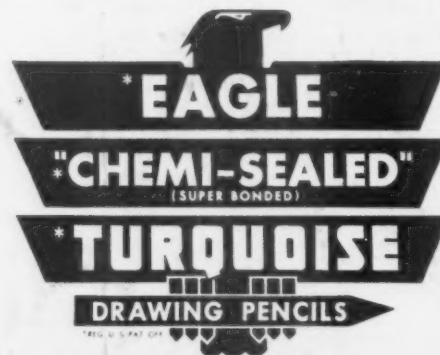
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